Current Economic Programs Printed Survey Results: by the *Characteristics of New Housing* Statistics Users Respondent Base

U.S. Census Bureau
Current Economic Statistics User Survey

OMB CQM-26 (Rev.5/5/98)

I. DATA CONTENT

Your answers identifying the survey data you use will help us understand our users' patterns of data use.

1. Which Current Economic Statistics from the Census Bureau do you use? (Mark all that apply.)

(1)   Monthly

0.6%;	1	None
50.0%;	87	Retail Sales
32.8%;	57	Wholesale Trade
39.7%;	69	Manufacturing/Trade Inventory/Sales
87.9%;	153	Housing Starts
78.2%;	136	Building Permits
78.2%;	136	New Home Sales
66.1%;	115	Value of New Construction Put in Place
64.9%;	113	Housing Completions
55.2%;	96	Expenditures for Residential Improvements
63.8%;	111	New Residential Construction
36.2%;	63	New Mobile Home Placements
35.6%;	62	Monthly Imports and Exports
41.4%;	72	Current Industrial Reports
37.9%;	66	Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, Orders

Replies 174; Forms 183

(2)   Quarterly

48.6%;	35	Quarterly Financial Report
77.8%;	56	Current Industrial Reports
8.3%;	6	Federal Assistance Awards Data System
22.2%;	16	Quarterly Tax Survey
12.5%;	9	Quarterly Public Employee Retirement

Replies 72; Forms 183

(3)   Annual

49.7%;	91	Annual Retail Trade
40.4%;	74	Annual (Wholesale) Trade
23.0%;	42	Annual Survey of Communications
26.8%;	49	Transportation Annual Survey
24.6%;	45	Service Annual Survey
54.1%;	99	County Business Patterns

33.3%;	61	ZIP Code Business Patterns
42.6%;	78	Statistics of U.S. Businesses
100.0%;	183	Characteristics of New Housing
70.5%;	129	Annual Building Permits
54.1%;	99	New Residential Construction in Selected Metropolitan Areas
28.4%;	52	Annual Capital Expenditures
50.8%;	93	Annual Survey of Manufactures
49.2%;	90	Current Industrial Reports
14.8%;	27	Research and Development Survey
25.7%;	47	Plant Capacity Utilization
9.8%;	18	Education Finance Survey
15.3%;	28	State Tax Collection Survey
7.1%;	13	Annual Public Employee Retirement
12.6%;	23	Annual Survey of Public Employment
14.8%;	27	Consolidated Federal Funds Report
23.5%;	43	State Government Finances
36.1%;	66	Annual Imports and Exports

Replies 183; Forms 183

II. DATA DELIVERY

The Census Bureau is considering use of the Internet as the primary method of data delivery. By completing the following questions, you will help us retain the most essential delivery formats and design the best possible data delivery service.

(4)   2. How do you receive current economic data now? (Mark all that apply.)

89.6%;	163	Printed Publications	17.0%;	31	FAX
76.9%;	140	World Wide Web (Internet)	9.3%;	17	Direct (E-mail) delivery
33.5%;	61	CD-ROMs	1.6%;	3	Regular mail
24.2%;	44	Diskettes	5.5%;	10	Other

Replies 182; Forms 183

- News Services such as Bridge.
- Electronic "Bulletin Boards"
- Check values by telephone
- also use microfiche in some cases.
- time-share vendor (private)
- Bulletin Board Commerce Dept.
- hard copy computer run
- Consultation w/colleagues who receive your material.
- Individual sources using census bureau data
- sec,Secondary Vendor (R
- CDRom & Publications in Library

(5)   3. What format do you PREFER when downloading data for further manipulation? (Mark all that apply.)

75.6%;	130	Spreadsheet (e.g., wkl, xls, etc...)
37.2%;	64	Database (e.g., dbf, mdb, etc...)
27.3%;	47	ASCII delimited
18.6%;	32	ASCII flat files
13.4%;	23	Retrieve from print or screen and enter manually
7.6%;	13	Do not manipulate data
1.2%;	2	Other

Replies 172; Forms 183

- TSO files
- Text files: txt. or PRN

4. What capabilities do you want on the Census Internet site?   (For each line, indicate the degree of your preferences, from 5 [high] to 1 [low].)

(6)   a. Direct (E-mail) delivery:

39.6%;	65 5		23.2%;	38 3		8.5%;	14 1	
13.4%;	22 4		7.9%;	13 2		7.3%;	12 Don't know	

Replies 164; Forms 183

(7)   b. E-mail notification:

48.2%;	79 5		18.3%;	30 3		7.9%;	13 1	
13.4%;	22 4		7.9%;	13 2		4.3%;	7 Don't know	

Replies 164; Forms 183

(8)   c. Retrieve/display to screen:

54.3%;	89 5		12.8%;	21 3		5.5%;	9 1	
18.9%;	31 4		2.4%;	4 2		6.1%;	10 Don't know	

Replies 164; Forms 183

(9)   d. Search:

65.3%;	111 5		13.5%;	23 3		1.2%;	2 1	
17.1%;	29 4		1.2%;	2 2		1.8%;	3 Don't know	

Replies 170; Forms 183

(10) e. Download complete data sets:

68.9%;	115 5		8.4%;	14 3		1.2%;	2 1	
18.6%;	31 4		1.2%;	2 2		1.8%;	3 Don't know	

Replies 167; Forms 183

(11) f. Download selected data:

73.5%;	125 5		7.1%;	12 3		0.6%;	1 1	
16.5%;	28 4		1.2%;	2 2		1.2%;	2 Don't know	

Replies 170; Forms 183

(12) g. Software help/tutorials:

17.8%;	28 5		29.9%;	47 3		10.2%;	16 1	
19.1%;	30 4		18.5%;	29 2		4.5%;	7 Don't know	

Replies 157; Forms 183

(13) h. Publication-quality printing:

27.6%;	45 5	19.0%;	31 3	12.9%;	21 1
23.3%;	38 4	14.1%;	23 2	3.1%;	5 Don't know

Replies 163; Forms 183

(14) i. Charts and graphs:

30.2%;	51 5	21.9%;	37 3	8.9%;	15 1
20.7%;	35 4	15.4%;	26 2	3.0%;	5 Don't know

Replies 169; Forms 183

(15) j. Geographic maps:

29.1%;	48 5	15.2%;	25 3	10.3%;	17 1
25.5%;	42 4	15.8%;	26 2	4.2%;	7 Don't know

Replies 165; Forms 183

(16) k. Other, please specify:

90.0%;	9 electronic bulletin board	10.0%;	1 Other

Replies 10; Forms 183

- ACROBAT FILES, which you may include in item h.

(17) l. Electronic Bulletin Board (To collect write-ins)

0.0%;	0 5	0.0%;	0 3	0.0%;	0 1
0.0%;	0 4	100.0%;	1 2	0.0%;	0 Don't know

Replies 1; Forms 183

III. DATA USAGE

Your answers describing how you use the data will help us design the most effective Current Economic Statistics retrieval tool.

(18) 5. Do you combine/compare/merge data from more than one source listed in Question 1?

20.3%;	36 No	79.7%;	141 Yes

Replies 177; Forms 183

(19) 6. What time periods do you consider when using these data? (Mark X all that apply.)

65.4%;	117 5+ years	48.0%;	86 trends up to 1 year
60.9%;	109 trends up to 5 years	0.0%;	0 Other
56.4%;	101 latest 1 or 2 periods		

Replies 179; Forms 183

(20) 7. How do you use the data? (Mark all that apply.)

51.4%;	91	Create value-added products/services
36.7%;	65	Perform patron/client inquiries
32.8%;	58	Inform marketing decisions
20.9%;	37	Republish in newspaper/journal
19.8%;	35	Inform investment decisions
18.6%;	33	Store reports/printouts for archival purposes
8.5%;	15	Locate new sites
0.6%;	1	Other

Replies 177; Forms 183

- Store data in database.

(21) 8. What explanatory information do you consult when using these data? (Mark all that apply.)

78.9%;	135	Definition of terms
63.7%;	109	Narrative text describing survey results
61.4%;	105	Sampling and estimation methodology
41.5%;	71	Survey design
9.4%;	16	None
2.3%;	4	Other

Replies 171; Forms 183

- frequency and availability
- Direct contact with Census analysts
- Comparisons to earlier surveys and/or similar data from other agencies--e.g. census to BEA in one estimates.
- Regression analysis

(22) 9. Do you have any pressing data or information needs that are not currently being met?

- Regional retail sales estimates (cancelled after 1996)
- More local info. (PMSA at least)
- Non-residential building permit data.
- State/MSA non-residential construction data!
- Find it difficult to get info a local area ie. N.E., Urban, but not specific such as New York. Also, like annual building Permits in greater detail to states or county level.
- Monthly RetailSales is no longer in print-- it is time consuming to get if off the ineternet because of the download time. It's a waste of valuable research time.
- Finding historic data sets requires going to the library - It would be very helpful if 1980 census data was on the internet as well.
- Retail Trade Monthly - Regional Data Survey - Blue Pages, Building Permits - Non-Resident & Additions.
- Apartment (Multi-Family) Statistics.
- Information on nonresidential construction.
- Data on residential construction; alterations, renovations and conversions; and county level mobile home shipments.
- Monthly retail sales were previously available by U.S. region!   We need this!
- MCD Business Patterns, Massachusetts is doing away with county government, MCD income estimates.
- Timely release of data in an easy-to-access format (ie: XLS, 123, etc.) with revisions and option of pulling complete time series.
- Non-residential building permits--number by type of building.
- Accurate and timely international statistics on the air conditioning, refrigeration and heating industry.

- We use and would like to continue to use retail sales by county data and the merchandise line sales data.
- I'd love to see employment data by SIC based on place of residence. Also wish for reconciliation between RIMS, SIC, & NAICS.
- Int'l trade data on internet are inadequate. Only press releases are there. When data are revised, if data are not in the press release, there is no way to get the revisions (ex: monthly data from exhibits 6&7 of FT900.
- Monthly historical trade data.
- Number of Mobile Homes & Value of, by state, on a monthly basis. (Currently only published annually) -- Also, by county, if possible.
- Better capital expenditure data and Better motor vehicle data.
- Non-residential building permits data nad value of new non-residential construction part in place.
- Combining county building permit data to MSA level would be useful.
- Any commercial construction activity-new or improvements
- Local U.S. MSA & county data.
- Statistics on new residential construction for MSA's in more locations (e.g. all top MSA's)
- 1) NAICS to harmonized code concordance. 2) Timely plant capacity utilization at greatest detail level possible. 3) Windows version import data/monthly annual easy to use historical with full detail. 4) New Home sales (without land).
- Yes--Commercial building permits--Bring them back now!!!
- YES! Bring back non-residential state/local permits authorized! This was a severe loss for interpreting local economic trends. Also, more geographic detail, more frequently.
- Wish you were more current...
- Would like to have detailed Boiling permit data on line. Would really like to know which census tracts correspond to zip codes (and counties).
- Seasonal Population - estimates. More information on affordable housing-market.
- State, county & local permit date for nonresidential construction. Use to get this.
- Monthly Retail Sales for U.S. Metropolitan Areas.
- HVAC Equipment sales-Target customers.
- Would like "New Mobile Home Replacement Report"
- 1). Employment in types of projects, such as residential construction. 2). Construction productivity measures.
- We want SIC data at the product level by region. Please make every effort to provide locational tags to Canadian & Mexican data. Full country data profiles are not sufficient.
- Would like Government Finance series in print form.
- 1). GDP 2). Need to see how prior dat releases of components affect quarterly advance.
- Up to date residential improvements data garage door 1 garage door openers involved in improvements.
- Better categorization of Import/Export information. It is very difficult to determine how much of some of our products were imported or exported.
- Non-residential Building permits.
- Housing stats and completions by state, MSA Valve of construction put-in-place by stats, MSA
- Yes, Non-residential permits and regional retail sales.
- Place and regional economic data sets in relation to population/race trends.
- Expenditures for non-residential construction, especially non-residential reconstruction.
- We always require information broken out by minority group status, even if they are forecast.
- Average expenditures per residential improvement project for single family homes by region. Average value for residential permits by region.
- The annual survey of manufacturers needs to be in ASCII or pdf format; as well as pdf. We spend too many hours re-entering the data.
- Need more timely delivery of C-50 dat (Res. Improvements). There is no contemporary measure of remodeling activity.
- Need detailed PPI data.
- Median income and poverty tables are not in spreadsheet form (they one were).
- MSA retail sales
- Permits for remodeling and non-residential construction.
- Population Projections

- Non-residential construction data outside California! Bring it back!
- Data at the metropolitan area level, e.g. retail sales, commercial building permits (office, industrial, retail).
- We have a need for long historical time series and for long-term forecasts.
- More immediate access to most current export & import data.
- Commercial Building Permits County level on a timely basis.
- Non-residential building permit data collection should be restored by state and metro area!
- Commercial building permits, Commercial real estates sales.
- Report on productionn of industrial fabrics
- Very disappointed that non-residential building permit data is no longer being tracked--our models rely on this!
- Building Permit data are not as complete as before - Rental vacancy rates & rental would be helpful.

IV. INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

We will soon begin restructuring the Current Economic Surveys based on the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Your answers will help us ensure that these surveys continue to provide the economic information needed by markets, policy makers, and business people. For more information on NAICS, see the Bureau's web site: http://www.census.gov/NAICS.

(24) 10. At what levels of detail do you MOST FREQUENTLY USE industry data classified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)? (Mark all that apply.)

62.9%;	107	4-digit industries (or maximum detail I can get)
37.6%;	64	3-digit industry groups
37.1%;	63	Sector totals (SIC division); e.g., Manufacturing or Retail Trade
37.1%;	63	2-digit major groups
9.4%;	16	NA (don't use SIC-based data)
2.9%;	5	Other

Replies 170; Forms 183

- The greatest level available--CIR level. Product level.
- Construction Put in Place Categories
- I don't use this much, but others in the agency do!
- 7-digit
- 6-digit product data

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(25) 11. Were you aware that the SIC system is being replaced by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)?

33.5%;	60	I was unaware of this
27.4%;	49	I am partially aware, but lack details
39.1%;	70	I am aware and understand some implications

Replies 179; Forms 183

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12. Would you like to receive more information about NAICS?

(26) Yes, please send me - (Mark all that apply)

89.6%;	103	A brochure that explains NAICS	26.1%;	30	Conference announcements
61.7%;	71	NAICS implementation plans	2.6%;	3	Other

Replies 115; Forms 183

- Definitions of NAICS codes.
- I already have the CD

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(27) No Thanks -

75.8%;   50 I will check the Census Bureau's web site (www.census.gov/naics)
24.2%;   16 I don't need more information about NAICS

Replies 66; Forms 183

V. USER PROFILE

Please tell us about yourself so we may serve you better.

(28) 13. Type of organization.

53.0%;	96 Business	2.8%;	5 Media
18.2%;	33 Government	1.7%;	3 Individual
13.8%;	25 Academic/Research	0.6%;	1 Library
6.1%;	11 Association	3.9%;	7 Other

Replies 181; Forms 183

- Consulting
- Small business
- Economic Development
- Building Material Manufacturer
- Library (University
- Corp. Library
- Regional Planning Commission

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(29) 14. Do you work in your organization's library?

25.8%;   47 Yes   74.2%;   135 No

Replies 182; Forms 183

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(30) 15. What is your affiliation with the Census Bureau?

78.7%;	137 None	2.9%;	5 Business/Industry Data Center
7.5%;	13 State Data Center	7.5%;	13 Other
3.4%;	6 Census Information Center		

Replies 174; Forms 183

- SDC Affiliate
- State Government Agency.
- Richmond Public Library, BST Dept. 101 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219
- Cooperator in disseminating permits authorized data
- Census Liason
- Customer
- Depository
- Affiliate Data Center
- Data use.
- GPO Depository
- Trade Association

- Associate Data Center
- Federal Depository Library

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(35) 20. May we contact you to follow up on this questionnaire?

79.9%; 131 Yes	20.1%; 33 No

Replies 164; Forms 183

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(36) Question 21. Remarks:

- The library relies heavily on Census data bu twe have a need for the information in both printed and downloadable (manipulable) formats. The library would purchase both the printed format as well as subscribe to the census website.
- Cost is often a fator with the use of Census information. Idealy, the Census Bureau could position itself similarly to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. BTS does an excellent job of disseminating transportation-related information. It would help researchers throughout the country if Census could apply the BTS template to its sociaeconomic data.
- Survey of manufacturing have input from business. The categories often do not match the real world.
- In our work with furniture manufacturers and retailers we consistently need breakdowns of mrgrs. shipments by product classification (ie. bedroom) on a more timely basis & retail sales at a smaller geographic level.
- A published paper version should always be made available for purchase to the public. Information being available on the internet is nice, yet it is a completely different animal than having a hard copy version of the information. An example: I can receive my new off the internet, but I still prefer to get my newspaper in the morning for reading at my leisure away from a computer.
- When is 1997 Census to be available? Please keep as much of the data in print as possible-- Thanks!
- --But please ask for Deborah Foster.

  Thank you.
- Thanks for asking!
- You have set up an excellent web site that is easy to use, fast and usually supplies me with the information I'm seeking.
- Thank you for providing these essential data. They will be even more useful if we can access and manipulate them as appears to be your intent.
- I prefer e-mail contacts rather than phone, as I am frequently not available at my phone for extended periods.
- We serve a varied clientale (academic, business, government, and private citizens) and work across many subject. Census data are absolutely vital to us. Our biggest need is for more geographic area detail more frequently (state, county, place, if possible). Users often do not understand the 5 yr. gaps and lag time for the major Economic Surveys that offer such detail, much less the 10 yr. decennial cycle. The internet is a great help in speeding "publication", but we find access is not yet universal. We still download and print entire documents for guide reference and historical purposes. I am concerned about just how long the electronic medi will remain accurate and usable as technology changes. How will the Bureau deal with these problems?
- Census has done a terrific job by putting so much material on the Wed. kepp up the good work.
- Please contact ASAP: Bob Davidson, Gov't Information Service Section Palm Beach county Library System Service

  3650 SUMMIT BLVD. 33406
  (561) 233-2600, ext. 164
  email Robert ID@PB.SEFLIN.ORG
- I supervise human service planning in the statewide planning agency. Mark Brown, who is a planner that I supervise, will replace Paul Egan as director of the State Data Center next June (June 1998). We use census data regularly in the preparation of studies and reports.

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  We are especially interested in state housing permit data.
- Data validity in the NAICS project is one of our concerns. Has any provision been for cross checks of the data?
- Sorry for the delay--the survey didn't arrive until 8/12/98.
- Would be very interested in some information available on the Internet.
- I think that this user survey is an excellent idea; you should poll users periodically.

  I would be happy to participate in a users' panel or advisory group.
- We look forward to working with you on the upcoming Census.
- Be sure that all information is made available in the most "user-friendly" manner possible!!
- Would be helpful if classes were offered in best techniques when seeking govt. data on the Web.

  Location on Web tha would state what media given U.S. Govt. was available in (papers, Internet, etc.)
- I think the advancements on the Web over the past few years have been excellent. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has put much of this data in raw form on their FTP site. I'd like to see the Census Bureau make the FTP site more accessible and have more information.
- I find the Census Website to be fairly difficult to use. It's hard to find information that I need. For example: I was trying to find tables on the number of Households & spent probably 45 minutes locating it.
- I work as a local government long range planner. My duties include socio-economic analysis as requested by the public, politicians and officials. The Census Bureau's Web Site is one of my key resources.
- We love the Census Bureau! Clear publications indices and ease of search engines on the Internet site are very important to us. Also, choice of how to download data is good, not all users need or can use spreadsheet software.
- Will all Census data be available only via the Internet? My customers prefer printed format. Thank you.
- More documentation and instructions for obtaining data from gohper directories would be helpful.
- Keep up the good work.
- Don't know if understood fully all questions, and maybe some confusion about my answers.

  But look to dat from the Census Bureau as important information to not only general business, but in possible use for publication to inform, specifically, members of the hardwood lbr business.
- Good to see this survey! Dealing with you via the Internet and mail is going well. However, trying to reach people ove rthe phone is still a major headache.
- Glad more of your publications are being made available on the Intenet! Suggestion for format of employment data-group by years first, then industry. Is there some alternative for obtaining non-residential building permits.

Figure 1: